

IN THE CLAIMS

The status of each claim is provided below:

Claims 1-8: (Canceled).

9. (Currently Amended): A method for producing nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester, comprising the steps of culturing a bacterium belonging to *Escherichia coli* having an ability to produce nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester, in which expression of *ushA* gene and *aphA* gene is decreased as compared to a wild type strain by mutating or disrupting the *ushA* gene and the *aphA* gene, in a medium to produce and accumulate nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester in a medium, and collecting the nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester from the medium, wherein the nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester is selected from the group consisting of inosine 5'-phosphate ester and guanosine 5'-phosphate ester, and wherein the 5'-nucleotidase activity in the periplasm is substantially eliminated.

Claim 10: (Canceled).

11. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the bacterium is further transformed with the mutant *purF* gene ~~coding for PRPP amidotransferase of which feedback inhibition by AMP and GMP is desensitized~~ of *Escherichia coli* coding for PRPP amidotransferase in which the lysine residue at position 326 is replaced with a glutamine residue.

12. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the bacterium is further transformed with ~~the *guaA* gene and the *guaB* gene~~ a *guaBA* operon of *Escherichia coli*.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester is inosine 5'-phosphate ester.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester is guanosine 5'-phosphate ester.